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FR

SUBJECT: SARKOZY'S AF ADVISOR FRUSTRATED BY GUINEA,
MADAGASCAR, AND CLAIMS OF "FRANCAFRIQUE;" SEES NO IMMEDIATE
THREAT IN NIGER

REF: PARIS 1534

Classified By: Kathleen Allegrone, Minister Counselor, for reasons 1.4
(b and d).

11. (C) Summary: During a December 22 meeting with Pol
Minister Counselor, Deputy Diplomatic Counselor and Chief
Africa Advisor to President Sarkozy, Andre Parant, was
worried that Guinea junta leader Dadis Camara could return to
Conakry very soon. Parant expressed frustration with "all
the parties" on the impasse in Madagascar, and stated that
the process now needs to move towards elections. He appeared
confident that there is little chance for a coup or major
political upheaval in Niger in the near term. In Parant's
view, assertions of the revival of an African policy based on
secret deal-making in the "francafrique" mode should not be
believed. End summary.

GUINEA

12. (C) POL Minister Counselor met on the afternoon of
December 22 with Andre Parant, Deputy Diplomatic Counselor
and Chief Africa Advisor to President Sarkozy. Parant had
heard that morning that CNDD leader Dadis Camara is anxious
to leave Morocco and the Moroccan government is "under
pressure" to not make him stay more than a few more days.
(Note: This apparently was a new assessment; on December
21, Elysee MEA and North Africa Advisor Galey told us that
France has "been persuasive" in putting considerable pressure
on the Moroccans to ensure that Dadis spends "a long time
getting to know Marrakesh," once he begins his convalescence.
End note.) Parant stated that Dadis "absolutely" cannot go
back to Guinea, despite the fact that the prospect of some
kind of criminal indictment against Dadis makes it more
difficult for Morocco or a different country to host him
indefinitely. Parant explained that he met with Burkina Faso
FM Yoda on Saturday to encourage Compaore to push for Morocco
to keep Dadis, but Parant was not confident that Compaore
would make much of an effort in this regard.

13. (C) When asked if Morocco could threaten Dadis' assets in
the Kingdom, Parant asserted that there was not much to seize
and speculated that providing Dadis financial incentives to
stay would be a more effective approach. Parant also worried
that if Dadis were to go to Libya or elsewhere we would
likely soon be requesting that the new hosts not let him
return to Conakry. Parant was not optimistic on moving
quickly to a new transitional government, and was critical of
Compaore's efforts. He added that Sekouba Konate is "afraid"
to take steps towards a transition government as long as the
possibility of Dadis' return exists.

14. (C) In an unrelated meeting on December 21, MFA Director
for the UN and International Organizations, Sylvie Bermann,
told visiting IO DAS Nossel that France wants to try to deal
with Guinea and the issue of possible crimes against humanity

in the Security Council. Berman was not specific about what France might propose, and she deflected Nossel's efforts to see if some element of the effort could be handled in the Human Rights Council. When asked during the December 22 meeting, Parant, however, appeared both skeptical about this approach and fixated on the need for swift action to keep Dadis out of Guinea.

MADAGASCAR

15. (C) Parant was quite defensive about France's performance as a mediator to the political crisis in Madagascar, noting that "all parties" had made mistakes, including other ICG members and the AU. He was critical of Andry "TVG" Rajoelina (TVG), but more so of the opposition. In Parant's view, it is too late to go back to efforts on a consensus government and so we "need to be pragmatic." Specifically, he feels that now is the time to convince TVG to reengage with the opposition and plan for elections that are fair and totally inclusive. At the January ICG, France will argue that the focus should be on establishing conditions for elections that will establish a parliament that can revise the constitution, leading to new presidential elections.

16. (C) Parant believes that the current situation has potential for "positive progress" and so French sanctions or suspension of assistance would be counter-productive. "Let's see what happens in January," he said, adding that if there's no progress by April or May, or should TVG make matters worse in the meantime, France could reconsider its position. Parant also asked if there could be some mechanism for the U.S. to postpone suspension of Madagascar's AGOA eligibility,

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even as he acknowledged the congressionally-mandated requirements of the Act.

NIGER

17. (C) Parant appeared most comfortable during a short discussion on the current security and stability situation in Niger. In his opinion, a near-term coup or other major violence was unlikely, and there is no immediate risk to Tandja from Niger's military, which is "not, at this time, particularly dissatisfied."

FRANCAFRIQUE

18. (C) Parant appeared defensive and exasperated when asked about recent press articles that claim the GOF is moving away from President Sarkozy's stated policy of "strategic" relations in Africa and returning towards the insider deals of "Francafrique." (Note: Parant's response on this topic was very similar to that of MFA Africa Director Stephane Gompertz in November, as reported in Reftel. End note). Parant stated unequivocally that France is taking a different approach and blamed poorly-informed and malicious reporters (and sources) for sensationalizing France's African relations. Parant pointed out that France has a long history with Africa, with thousands of citizens on the continent, a large number of business ties, and many people with long-standing high-level contacts (including some people close to Sarkozy), but in terms of GOF policy, "all has changed."

19. (C) Parant underscored the importance of France's new approach towards military relations with Africa, noting that in the 1970s France had 30,000 troops in sub-Saharan Africa and in the '80s there were still 15,000 troops. Today, according to Parant, France has only around 4,500 troops in Africa, and that number will decrease further. Parant reiterated that Sarkozy has committed to closing one of France's Atlantic military bases (in either Gabon or Senegal). That decision will depend on the on-going negotiations with those countries on new military cooperation agreements. The new agreements, unlike the "secret" ones of

the past, will be ratified by the National Assembly and publicized, Parant said.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) Parant, who formerly served as Charge d'Affairs at the French Embassy in Beirut from 2007-09, has been described by French commentators as somebody who "is not dogmatic and who will not make waves." Apparently close to Claude Gueant, Secretary-General at the Presidency, a figure frequently mentioned in discussions of "francafrique," Parant nonetheless is adamant that France's relations with Africa are changing. Perhaps as proof of France's diminishing position in Africa, French officials are frustrated by their inability to positively influence the situations in Guinea, Madagascar, or Niger.

¶11. (U) Conakry and Tripoli minimize considered.
RIVKIN